

President's Column

One of my major challenges, as newly-elected President of this congregation, is the task of preparing a monthly *Forward* article that will grab your attention and keep you riveted to your seats. Of the myriad items occurring daily in our synagogue life, I will do my best to select those of interest to you. For this issue, I will try to keep you riveted with: the Advance, our annual leadership week-end; the formation of our Past Presidents Council; and a brief personal resume.



PHOTO BY LAURIE DAVIS

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is now in its ninth year; I have been a member of the shul for seven. During that time I have witnessed the most extraordinary growth and development, not only of the organization, but also of the many individuals within it—including myself. Many times it feels as if this has been a 7-year course of study that has included: human relations; fiscal planning and management; fundraising; good meeting process; time management; organization; sermon writing; program planning; public speaking; and, of course, bagel shmeering. What would this course be worth in the academic marketplace? It is impossible to place a value on opportunities for so much personal enrichment; and while I may have contributed in various ways, I believe that this presidency is my way of paying back part of what I have received.

(Continued on page 2)

Labor Day Weekend Extravaganza

Don't miss out on the summer's most exciting event—a weekend of fun in the sun with gay and lesbian Jews and friends from throughout the western United States! Scheduled for Labor Day Weekend, August 29–31 at Camp Swig in Saratoga, this upcoming retreat should prove to be a major highlight of the synagogue year.

The weekend will begin on Friday afternoon, when on arrival people will be able to take advantage of the camp facilities, including a beautiful outdoor swimming pool (complete with diving board), tennis, volleyball, etc. The activities will formally begin with a Shabbat dinner, followed by Shabbat services, which will be held in a cozy redwood sanctuary completely surrounded by glass walls and a grove of trees. A sumptuous Oneg Shabbat will follow, including live entertainment.

Saturday and Sunday's activities will include nature walks, a poolside dance,

midnight campfire, movies, swimming, sports, etc. In addition to all of the relaxing activities, workshops and discussion groups will be held throughout the weekend, on a variety of diverse topics including: parenting, legal aspects of gay/lesbian relationships, intimacy and communication, women in Judaism and bisexuality.

Sponsored by the six gay and lesbian congregations in the western United States, we expect an attendance in excess of 75 people. We will have exclusive use of the camp grounds for the weekend, so we can all spread out, relax and bring the summer months to an end together. We look forward to seeing all of you there. Early registration is encouraged in order to ensure the best sleeping accommodations. For further information, please contact Eric Keitel at 239-8180. Send requests for registration materials to: Congregation Beth Chayim Chadashim, 6000 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.

We're Taking a Vacation!

The Newsletter Committee, that is, not the shul. This issue is a combined July/August issue so that all the members of the Committee can take a much deserved break. The next issue will be out September 1 (copy deadline August 11). We've tried to include announcements of all the summer events coming up—Women's Havurah, Family Havurah, the Annual Softball Game, and much more. There will be announcements at services of any late-breaking events—or give the office a call to get details on other summer events.

Also on vacation in August will be Rabbi Kahn—from August 11 through August 30. In case of an emergency, please contact the synagogue office.

Enjoy the summer, and see you (officially) in September.

A Family Affair

Our first Family Havurah meeting, held Saturday, May 10, was a big success. Nearly thirty people enjoyed the potluck, program and singing. The Havurah's second gathering is scheduled for Sunday, July 13, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, at 6409 Hillegass in Oakland. "Shabbat candles" will be the theme, and one of the activities will be actually making our own candles. Please bring smocks or old shirts to wear, as well as a potluck dish that will feed 10 people. Please RSVP to 534-1606 (Sue) or 534-2339 (Jill) so we'll know to expect you.

Friday nights July 25 and August 29 there will be something special for children during part of the regular Friday night service. Children will be able to enjoy singing and a story upstairs during the Amidah and sermon. We hope to make this a regular monthly event.

—Sue Douglass

To those presidents who have come before me, I thank you all for your contributions, and for the selflessness you displayed during your terms of office. In recognizing the value of the combined experience and knowledge of our past presidents, we will be forming a Past Presidents Council. The council will serve as an advisory group to the President and leadership, and will hold its first meeting this month. We will formally honor our past presidents later this year.

I must state that Don Albert, our immediate past-president, did an outstanding job during his term. Under Don's leadership our congregation reached new heights in the areas of meeting management and administration. His talents were a blessing to us during some of our tougher Va'ad and Executive Committee meetings. We all bring different skills and assets to our roles; my strong suits are in the areas of creativity and planning. My head is brimming over with ideas and plans for our future, but I recognize that this enthusiasm will have to be tempered by the will of the congregation. It will be

exciting to journey with you and see just how much we can get done together.

These ideas, along with many topics of current interest to our readership, will be on the agenda during our intensive Advance this upcoming July 11-13. Thirty-one members of our leadership have offered their time and energy to attend this important event at their own expense. We will be discussing: our ritual life; death and dying—our traditions as well as how we can take care of ourselves and others; the never-ending subject of money and our fiscal responsibilities for the coming year; and ways in which we can hear and support each other better during committee meetings. We will also explore how the quality and quantity of the work we do affects us as volunteers.

I am available to all of the membership to hear your thoughts—call or write to the synagogue and I will respond to your comments and feedback.

It is my honor to serve this year and to grow with you all as our future unfolds.

—I.O.

Women's Havurah Leads Service

Members of the Women's Havurah and other interested women will be leading services at Sha'ar Zahav on Friday, August 1. Women interested in participating who did not sign up at the May Women's Havurah social event should get in touch with Susan Unger, the service coordinator, through the synagogue office.

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Members of the Congregation receive the *Forward*. For a donation of \$12/year, non-members will receive the *Forward*.

All newsletter copy should be typed, double-spaced and is due no later than the date of the Va'ad meeting. It should be sent to the Synagogue office, marked to the attention of the *Forward*.

Members of the Newsletter Committee are Bob Goldware (Articles Coordinator), Stephanie Hannaford (Graphics Coordinator), Jay Feinstein (Advertising Coordinator), Alex Ingersoll, Garry Koenigsberg, Alita Rosenfeld and David Stein (general editorial and production); Laurie Davis (photos); Frank Hyman, Ben Schalit, Barry Siegel, Sam Thal and Eli Weinstein (distribution). The *Forward* is typeset by Artspec Imaging Ltd.

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Classified Ads are \$5.00 for up to 20 words, plus \$1.00 for each 10 additional words.

Payment must accompany ad and should be sent to Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 220 Danvers at Caselli, San Francisco, California 94114, marked attention *Forward* advertising. The advertising deadline is the 10th of the month. The *Forward* reserves the right to reject any ad for reasons of taste. For more information on advertising rates and charges, call the Synagogue Office at 861-6932.



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Women Advance!

At a hamburger stand in the Mission, I was waited on by a dark-skinned woman, whom I assumed to be Latina. She admired my Star of David and let me know she was Jewish. I was surprised and asked her if she was Sephardic. "Oh no," she laughed, "I'm from New York."

Funny, but also a sad commentary on the current state of Jewish education. This woman was cut off from her roots, the history of her people. She had lost the very meaning of "Sephardic," the immense cultural heritage of Mediterranean—as opposed to European—Jews.

What I'd like to address in this open letter is related—Jewish lesbians reconnecting themselves to their roots: Judaism.

I often wonder about all those women we see attending High Holy Day services. They certainly have a lot of good reasons for *not* joining Sha'ar Zahav and *not* participating and *not* coming to services for most of the year. They're busy. They're tired. They're assimilated. Judaism has cast them out because of their sexual preference. They've cast out Judaism because of its sexism. They feel that Judaism lacks meaning in modern America. A dismaying amount of people believe Judaism to be dead or dying, an irrelevant relic incompatible with being a woman, being gay, being American.

But religion is like a language—if it's spoken, if it's used, and if it changes according to necessity and circumstance, it's alive. A religion is only as alive as the participants who demand that it meet their needs. Judaism *can* meet the needs of modern, American lesbians, *if* they participate. I feel that we can catch the interest of Jewish lesbians unaffiliated with Sha'ar Zahav, and inspire them to think about being Jewish in a new way.

At the last Havurah event, all of the ideas for future plans revolved around: having fun, boosting female membership at Sha'ar Zahav and determining how Sha'ar Zahav (and Judaism in general) might better serve the needs of lesbians. One of the ideas that emerged was that Sha'ar Zahav sponsor a weekend retreat for Bay Area Jewish lesbians in order to accomplish these goals.

What would we do at such a gathering? We could create rituals designed for us. We could celebrate and just plain have fun. We could argue—we all like that. We could network—that's Mitzvah #1 in the Lesbian Rulebook. Most important, we

(Continued on page 11)

Memorials Design Approved

The Building Committee and Fine Arts Advisory Panel are proud to announce that a handsome design for our congregation's memorial boards has been approved by the Va'ad and the first of several such boards has been ordered. The boards, to be located on the lower western wall of the sanctuary, will be of finished mahogany, set with cast bronze plaques memorializing the yahrzeits of Sha'ar Zahav members, their friends and families. A single lamp will burn perpetually at the top of each board.

Among the plaques appearing on the first board will be those in memory of the six members of our congregation who have died. (Memorial plaques will be provided by the congregation for deceased members.)

Members who desire to order a plaque to honor loved ones are asked to contact the synagogue office with a copy in writing of the text to be cast on each 2x10 inch

plaque. Text can include names, dates of birth and death, relationship to the donor, etc., but are limited to three lines. Text can be in Hebrew as well as English, and the office can help provide a correct translation upon request. The size of the letters, of course, will depend upon the length of the text.

The cost of each plaque ordered by a member is \$360 (20 x chai) and is payable at the time of ordering. Arrangements for deferred payments can be made with the Treasurer.

The memorial board itself is available for dedication. Each donor of a board will be honored with a large, separate plaque at the base of the board, cast with a dedication chosen by the donor. Please contact the President or Building Committee Chair for additional information regarding this mitzvah.

—David Gellman, Chair
Building Committee

Summer Reading

Expand your world and learn about yourself through reading fiction! America's Jewish writers form a unique subculture in contemporary American literature similar to the place American Jews have in the life of this country. In this summer's book circle, led by Jonathan Schwartz, librarian at the Jewish Community Library, we will explore the special Jewish-American qualities found in stories by Bellow, Ozick, Malamud, Olsen and others in open-ended discussions on six Tuesday evenings: July 8—August 12, 7:30 pm at the synagogue. For registration and further information, call the synagogue office.

New Members

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that our Congregation gained more new members in June. A warm welcome to the latest family to join our family:

Blanche Blachman
Adrienne Forshay
Benjamin Blachman Forshay

New members are welcomed and honored at Friday night services on the last Friday of the month. By making them feel a part of our family, we can all help to show our new members that they have a valuable place at Sha'ar Zahav.

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“Justice, justice shall you pursue.”

Do not make a mockery of justice, for it is one of the three pillars of the world. For our sages taught: ‘On three things the world stands: on justice, on truth, and on peace.’ Know, then, that if you pervert justice, you shake the world, for justice is one of its pillars. (Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel)

No position is more honored in the Jewish tradition than that of judge. The primary attribute of God is justice. In the Torah, judges are called *Elohim*—a name of God—because of their special responsibilities to act as God’s representatives. The ethical teachings of the Bible and later Jewish writings emphasize the impartiality and fairness required for true justice. In Leviticus 19:15, judges are cautioned: “Do not render an unfair decision; neither favor the poor nor show deference to the rich; judge all people fairly.” The integrity of judges was also scrupulously grounded.

The integrity of our state’s Supreme Court is threatened in this November’s election. Six justices of the court are up for reconfirmation. There are no competing candidates; the only question under the law is whether each individual judge has been honest and loyal to the laws and constitution of the State. A major attack has been launched by conservative political groups who vigorously oppose the reconfirmation of Chief Justice Bird and two other justices.

No one has accused the justices of any illegal conduct or even the appearance of impropriety. No bribes have been accepted; no favors offered. The only charge is that the justices have been doing their jobs—which is to interpret the law according to the Constitution as they see proper. Those groups seeking to unseat

Chief Justice Rose Bird and Justices Cruz Reynoso and Joseph Grodin disagree with the tone and impact of the decisions the Court has made.

Nothing could be more dangerous to our system of government and the protection of civil liberties for all people than this attempt to politicize the judiciary. If the justices are not reconfirmed, their successors and all other judges will know that they are not free to make decisions according to their understanding of the law but will have to weigh the political consequences of every decision. What then will happen to the rights of minorities or individuals for whom the courts are the last line of defense against discrimination by the majority?

Opponents argue that Chief Justice Bird and the court are refusing to enforce the state’s death penalty law. In fact, the law itself requires the Supreme Court to review every conviction which results in the death penalty. The Court is responsibly fulfilling its assigned tasks by carefully reviewing the cases before it. The Jewish legal tradition urges extreme care in deciding capital cases—because in this matter the judges truly sit in the place of God. When the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court of ancient Israel, met to vote on a verdict in a capital case, the youngest judge—and presumably, the most open to being influenced by the votes of others—cast the first vote. The others followed in reverse order of seniority. So concerned were the judges lest they make an error in such a case, that even after all possible avenues of appeal were exhausted they remained open to new evidence. At the time of execution, a person with a flag was stationed outside the court, so that if a

new witness should appear, the execution could be halted. The judges of the California Supreme Court are not undermining the law when they carefully review capital cases, and, when the facts warrant, return cases for retrial in a lower court. They are upholding the law and seeking to do justice.

Groups supporting the justices under attack have called for the reconfirmation of all the justices on the ballot, including both the “liberal” justices and the more recent “conservative” appointees of Gov. Deukmejian. The personal political or legal style of the individual justices should not be an issue—this was considered before they were appointed and confirmed on the bench. At issue is the need for an independent judiciary which can make decisions regardless of their public popularity and free from partisan politics.

—Rabbi Yoel Kahn

Oneg Sponsors

During the month of May, Friday night Onegs were sponsored by the following generous people:

- 1—The Newsletter Committee, in honor of all their faithful readers
- 9—Don Gordon
- 30—Sharyn Saslafsky, in memory of Mark Feldman

All you have to do to sponsor an Oneg is to think of the occasion and contact the synagogue office (861-6932). The cost of sponsoring an Oneg is approximately \$50 (partial sponsorship available) or you can also provide the food, flowers, etc. for a more personal touch.

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Social Action Committee

Sanctuary and Fall Election Issues

Following the Action Plan contained in CSZ's Covenant of Sanctuary adopted at the May Congregational Meeting, the Social Action Committee has formed a Sanctuary Subcommittee. This group of concerned members, chaired by Ami Zusman, will work for reform and fair implementation of U.S. laws regarding Central American refugees and will consider other appropriate steps to assist refugees. Your participation and input is welcome. Russell Discher has agreed to serve as liaison with the San Francisco Jewish Sanctuary Coalition and other groups working to assist refugees.

Also as part of the Action Plan, contributions can be made to the sanctuary revolving bond fund which is earmarked for currently incarcerated refugees. We hope to enable at least one refugee to be released from custody so that she or he can pursue legal remedies for asylum.

Over the next several weeks, information will be available at the synagogue regarding the Moakley-DeConcini bill, which is currently stalled in the U.S. Congress. This bill would provide for "extended voluntary departure," which would allow refugees from selected countries to remain in the U.S. pending further study of conditions in their homeland. As we receive more information on this bill, we will make it available to interested members and advise how you can make your views heard.

Supreme Court Forum: Other important activities of the Social Action Committee include providing information to the congregation about the California Supreme Court confirmation election in November. Allyce Kimerling, Jonathan Mesinger, Robin Leonard and Russell Discher are working on an education program, beginning with a community forum at 7:00 pm, Sunday, September 14 at the synagogue.

The proposed "La Rouché Initiative" will be another area of focus as we move toward the November elections and ballot initiatives.

The next meetings of the Social Action Committee will be Thursdays July 17 and August 21, 7:30 pm at the shul.

—Ron Lezell, Chair
Social Action Committee

July Birthdays

- 7 Betty Kalis
- 8 Ben Schalit
- 9 Steve Elman
- 9 Bob Goldware
- 10 Don Clark
- 10 Bill Schlichter
- 11 Laurent Gasperini
- 14 Paul Wotman
- 16 Alan Ellis
- 16 Alice Perlman
- 20 Hannah Blazewick
- 21 Debbie
- 22 Barbara Nabors-Glass
- 23 Nancy Meyer
- 24 Abigail Abbuehl
- 25 Sally Martin
- 28 David Levine
- 28 Cheryl Orvis
- 29 Steve Lowinger
- 29 Jonathan Schwartz
- 30 Prudence Carter

Rabbi Weiner Joins Us

On Friday, August 8, Rabbi Martin Weiner will be giving a sermon from a different pulpit. Leaving his usual post at Sherith Israel that evening, Rabbi Weiner will join us for services and will deliver the sermon. Steve Greenberg will lead services.

August Birthdays

- 1 Edward L.
- 2 Francie McGowan
- 4 Jonathan Funk
- 4 Nancy Snow
- 7 John Golebowski
- 9 Allan Gold
- 11 Dustyn Duncan
- 12 David Glassberg
- 14 Tali Stern
- 16 Chaya Spector
- 16 Lee Vogel
- 18 Max Zaslawsky
- 19 Dan Bellm
- 19 Paul Cohen
- 21 Kathy Sharp
- 23 Frank Hyman
- 23 Mike Lipson
- 25 Sen Talley
- 26 Diane Kuchins
- 30 Marilyn Miller
- 30 Shelley Spiro

Bikkur Cholim Planning Session

A planning meeting for the congregation's Bikkur Cholim program is scheduled for Tuesday evening, July 22 at 7:30 pm in the Oneg Room. Past Bikkur Cholim activities have given members an opportunity to perform mitzvot and to bring caring support to members as well as the elderly and poor within our community.

Although our congregation can be proud of its response to the AIDS crisis on both local and national levels, we need a more organized way of caring for the needs of individual members with ARC, AIDS or other life-threatening illnesses. Our role will be to augment the excellent community services available in the Bay Area. During our meeting, we will discuss realistic goals and objectives as well as the kinds of mitzvah opportunities that are already available to members. Synagogue members can do food shopping, cook a meal, take someone home or to a restaurant, help someone get to a medical appointment, or visit. We will also be sharing a few of our treasured recipes for "magical chicken soup" and baked goods which transport easily in Tupperware.

Mark your calendars for this important meeting and bring your ideas, questions and commitment.

Lag B'Omer, San Francisco Style

A gloomy, foggy day, and unique "only in San Francisco" directions to the location, only added to the adventure for the 30-35 people who came to the Redwood Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park for the Lag B'Omer Picnic on Sunday, June 1.

Festivities included frisbee, and intense—but not competitive!—volleyball, and the ever-popular wrapping up in a blanket to keep warm.

A significant highlight was the mounted police officer and his friendly horse, who trotted in our direction to warn us that the nearby bathroom was sometimes frequented by people of "different lifestyles." We expressed gratitude for the information.

Next year's picnic may feature volleyball in the sun, or we may hold it again in San Francisco.

—Robin Leonard, Chair
Membership Committee

Ritual Calendar

— July

Friday, July 4

Sha'ar Zahav 9th Anniversary Service

Parshah: Shelach Lecha,
Num. 13:1-15:41

Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24
Daniel Chesir

Friday, July 11

Parshah: Korach, Num. 16:1-18:32

Haftarah: I Samuel 11:14-12:22
Jonathan Funk

Friday, July 18

Parshah: Hukat-Balak,
Num. 19:1-25:9

Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8
Daniel Chesir
The Torah will be read.

Friday, July 25

Parshah: Pinchas, Num. 25:10-30:1

Haftarah: I Kings 18:46-19:31
Rabbi Yoel Kahn
Special Children's Program

Saturday, July 26

Morning Services, 10:30 am
Rabbi Yoel Kahn and Eric Keitel

Sibling Notes

Atlanta: Bet Haverim celebrated its first birthday June 6. It is making plans to host the Southeast Regional Conference of Lesbian and Gay Jews November 7-9.

New York: Beth Simchat Torah recently participated in New York's first community-wide conference on lesbian and gay Jews in the Jewish community. The conference brought together a significant number of synagogues and Jewish agencies to address the issues of alienation and oppression confronting lesbian and gay Jews and their families as well as the fears and concerns of the larger Jewish community.

Philadelphia: Beth Ahavah marked its eleventh anniversary with a brunch and awards ceremony.

Washington, DC: Bet Mishpachah announced that it has been accepted as a sponsoring synagogue in the DC Consortium for Adult Jewish Studies. Members of the Consortium, a cooperative project of DC synagogues and several local Jewish agencies, pool their resources to provide otherwise unavailable Jewish adult education courses.

— August

Friday, August 1

Women's Havurah Service

Parshah: Mattot-Massei,
Num. 30:2-36:13

Haftarah: Jeremiah 2:4-28, 3:4
Susan Unger, Service Coordinator

Friday, August 8

Parshah: D'varim, Deut. 1:1-3:22

Haftarah: Isaiah 1:1-27
Steve Greenberg, Service Leader
Rabbi Martin Weiner, Sermon

Wednesday, August 13

Tisha B'Av Service, 7:30 pm
Ritual Committee & Friends

Friday, August 15

Shabbat Nachamu

Parshah: Va-Etchanan,
Deut. 3:23-7:11

Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26
Garry Koenigsberg

Friday, August 22

Parshah: Ekev, Deut. 7:12-11:25

Haftarah: Isaiah 49:14-51:3
Leslie Bergson

Saturday, August 23

Morning Services, 10:30 am
Susan Unger

Friday, August 29

Parshah: Re'eh, Deut. 11:26-16:17

Haftarah: Isaiah 54:11-55:5
Ritual Committee & Friends
Special Children's Program

Ritual Preview — September

Friday, September 5

Parshah: Shoftim, Deut. 16:18-21:9

Haftarah: Isaiah 51:12-52:12
Rabbi Yoel Kahn

Anniversaries

7/4	Lee Ryan & Robin Leonard
8/1	Leila Raim & Catherine Wisniewski
8/14	Allan Blumenfeld & Morry
8/23	Aaron Cooper & Eric Keitel
8/28	Judy Macks & Adele Prandini

Softball Game and Picnic

Yes, it's that time again for all CSZ'ers, friends and family to dust off the ol' mitt for the semi-regular Gala Softball Game (or some semblance thereof) and picnic. On Sunday August 24, all are invited to participate in the game, picnic or cheer-leading.

Were you ever chosen last as a child when it came time to pick up teams? If so, this game, where once again the Golden Band-Aid Award will be presented, is for you. Contrary to popular belief, there will not be batting practice this year in Allan Gold's living room.

As usual, the game will be held at Julius Kahn Playground in the Presidio, with festivities beginning at 11:00 am. So plan on bringing a picnic lunch and a baseball mitt (if you have one). Bats, balls, bases and a charcoal grill will be provided. Hope to see you there.

Directions: Enter the Presidio through the Arguello Gate. Make an immediate sharp right and follow the wall down to the bottom of the hill. The picnic area and playing field are to the left.

—Ron Lezell, Coach

So Who Are We, Anyway?

The most comprehensive survey and census of Bay Area Jews ever conducted began on May 20 and will continue through November. The study, which will maintain the anonymity of respondents, will provide a much clearer picture of Jewish life in the Bay Area—our values, lifestyles, and concerns.

Known as "Count Me In," the study represents a unique collaboration among three Jewish Federations: the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties; the Jewish Federation of the Greater East Bay; and the San Jose Jewish Federation.

The results of the survey, expected around February 1987, will be provided to all three federations, the social service agencies that come under their umbrella, and synagogues and Jewish organizations. The information will directly influence the planning, development and delivery of services and programs to the Jewish community.

The study is *not* a fund raising effort; your participation is encouraged if you are contacted.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
JULY		24 Sivan 1	25 2	26 3	27 4 9th Anniversary Services 8:15pm	28 5
29 6	30 7 Rosh Chodesh I	1 Tammuz 8 Women's Retreat Planning Mtg. 7:30pm 824-7290 Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	2 9 Soviet Jewry Vigil Green & Baker 11:30am	3 10	4 11 Leadership Advance (to Sunday) Services 8:15pm	5 12
6 13 Family Havurah 6409 Hillegas, Oakland 10am-1pm	7 14 Va'ad Meeting 6:30pm	8 15 Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	9 16	10 17 Social Action Comm. 7:30pm	11 18 Services 8:15pm	12 19
13 20	14 21	15 22 Bikkur Cholim Comm. 7:30pm Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	16 23	17 24	18 25 Services 8:15pm Children's Program	19 26 Morning Services 10:30am
20 27	21 28	22 29 Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	23 30 Newsletter Comm. 7:30pm 1772 Sanchez	24 31		
					25 1 Services 8:15pm Rabbi Weiner, Sermon	26 2

AUGUST

27 3	28 4	29 5 Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	1 Av 6 Rosh Chodesh	2 7	3 8 Services 8:15pm	4 9 Gay Games II (to 8/17)
5 10	6 11 Va'ad Meeting 6:30pm	7 12 Summer Reading Program 7:30pm	8 13 Soviet Jewry Vigil Green & Baker 11:30am Tisha B'Av Services 7:30pm	9 14 Tisha B'Av	10 15 Services 8:15pm	11 16
12 17	13 18	14 19	15 20	16 21 Social Action Comm. 7:30pm	17 22 Services 8:15pm	18 23 Morning Services 10:30am
19 24 Picnic/Softball Game 11:00am Julius Kahn Playground	20 25	21 26	22 27	23 28 Newsletter Mailing 7:30pm 11 Grandview Terr.	24 29 Services 8:15pm Children's Program	25 30 Western Regional Conference Camp Swig (to Monday)
26 31						

Out of the Closet of Ignorance

[Sha'ar Zahav tries to affect not only our own community, but the wider world as well. We may have succeeded recently when one of our members spoke about the Congregation at Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel in Cambridge. After his talk, the following appeared in the Boston Jewish Advocate.]

Recently, I attended a memorable talk at Harvard University Hillel House, one in which the speaker described an active, young congregation and the work they are doing in building a Jewish community. Their religious heritage is a vital force to them, both in their inward growth and in their outward service to their members, their children, the elderly, the needy around the world, and non-member families in joy and grief. The congregation, Sha'ar Zahav of San Francisco, is what many congregations aim to be, with one difference; most of its members choose partners of the same gender to share their lives and dreams.

The speaker, Dr Michael Rankin, past president of the Reform congregation, forced his listeners to re-evaluate and put aside the stereotypes they might have held. The audience included both the intellectually curious and those seeking an inspiring role model. The warm, urbane visitor was given sustained and energetic applause at the close of his talk.

As a religiously active, suburban Boston Jew, I found that this event raised many questions. Do most of us have any reason to give thought, much less action, to needs and issues surrounding the gay and lesbian segment of our Boston community? During my years at Harvard, a talk such as this was unlikely to take place. Today, the topic it addresses does not arise in the congregation my wife and I attend.

I suspect that many would ask: "Why should it? The subject and lifestyle are taboo: what more is there to say or do?"

Perhaps there is much more indeed. Let us not ask ourselves, "What should I and my friends think of gays and lesbians," but rather "What must my gay and lesbian friends think of me?" If we write down a list of our twenty favorite people—friends, relatives, co-workers—there is a great likelihood that at least one of those individuals is gay or lesbian. We and that particular individual may live on the same block, play racquetball together, share family celebrations, or work in the same office.

What pain do we inflict upon this friend or family member by our public attitude of hostility or indifference? To him or her, we may be a sad disappointment. By our casual remarks or jokes, or by our silence, we show that our esteem, our affection, cannot be relied upon in a personal crisis. Unwittingly, our mentality of "us" versus "them" turns us away from those we care about but do not fully know or appreciate.

What else can we do? Quite simply, we who are thoughtful and empathetic human beings can come out of our own closets of ignorance. We can educate ourselves through the many sources of information available to us in the press, bookstores, and libraries. We can openly confront gay and lesbian issues and drop our phobic reactions—because of, not in spite of, our moral convictions. Gays and lesbians exist within our own communities and our own social circles; they demand only to live their lives in peace and dignity.

Ironically, our compassion in respond-

Please,

don't forget our brothers in need. Keep filling the shul's collection baskets with non-perishable food and other household items for the SF AIDS Foundation's residence program

ing to the tragedy presented by AIDS can provide both a measure of badly needed emotional support to those dying in their youth, and a show of life-giving understanding to the healthy. The field of public response should not be left to moral leathernecks. Verbal and financial support are signs that we at least do care.

We in Boston have an opportunity to demonstrate both types of support. On Sunday, June 1, a 10-kilometer walk for AIDS fundraising will start out at 11:00 am from Boston Common...fittingly named "From All Walks of Life."

The title chosen for this event is intended to emphasize that AIDS is not a gay crisis, but one that affects all of us; a response is needed from us all. It would be fitting to respond with conviction and compassion—as Jews and Bostonians. We can participate, we can contribute, or we can comment with sensitivity if the topic arises in conversation. I plan to attend on June 1 and give a visible message to my co-religionists and friends by dedicating my walk in honor of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav. The gates of mercy we open to those we do not know may be the gates of blessing that open to us and those we love.

—Ari Goldman,
Boston Jewish Advocate

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Spotlight On...

Francie McGowan

Francie McGowan's apartment is an oasis of tranquility and culture. Opera and the classics waft through rooms filled with mementoes of her travels across the U.S. and abroad. Her calligraphy hangs framed on the wall and "how to learn Hebrew" books are on her reading table.

Who is Francie McGowan? You may not have noticed her before. She's pretty quiet and she's only been an official member of Sha'ar Zahav for six months. Her volunteer activities are mainly behind the scenes but perhaps you caught her act as one of Esther's miniskirted backup singers in *Polyester* last Purim. "If only my mother could have seen me in a dress after all these years," says Francie.



PHOTO BY LAURIE DAVIS

Francie is one of those people we only read about in books: a native San Franciscan. Brought up as a non-denominational Christian, she felt more and more of a need for organized religion as she matured. In looking around for a religion to embrace, she found Judaism a logical choice. She felt a natural affinity for it, her ex-husband is Jewish, and she felt at home with Jews. A rabbi friend of hers suggested she check out Sha'ar Zahav, saying that it made sense to join a gay synagogue if you were a gay Jew. So Francie has been attending services at our shul since last August.

She concluded that there was no better way to get to know people than by working with them. So even before she became an official member, Francie joined the Social Program Committee and was one of the movers and shakers behind our last Hanukah party. She did the calligraphy on the flyers, got the liquor license, helped decorate and joined in on general planning sessions.

When it came time to plan the Purim party, she was already an experienced hand. In addition to the usual planning and decoration, she debuted in one of our

(Continued on page 11)

President's Awards

The recognition of volunteers is the last and most pleasant part of my presidency. The time and energy given by our members is the lifeblood of this congregation and part of the reason for our success. We can all take pride in the work that we have done together.

First, I would like to recognize a group of individuals who have demonstrated an extraordinary level of voluntary support. Their work has been outstanding in this as well as previous years. Each of them has demonstrated a long standing commitment to the quality of our congregational life. These members, each of whom will receive a Kiddush cup engraved: "Sha'ar Zahav, June, 1986," are: Peter Abinanti, Leslie Bergson, Paul Cohen, Ralph Frischman, David Gass, David Gellman, Allan Gold, Frank Hyman, Alex Ingersoll, Richard Inlander, Betty Kalis, Shirley Liberman, Nancy Meyer, Irene Ogus and Mike Rankin.

I would also like to pay tribute to all of those members who have made our committee and program activities a success. Each of these members was involved in a meaningful way this past year and made Sha'ar Zahav a better place for each of us. Certificates of Appreciation will be sent to the following members: Mike Abramson, Bill Ashley-Dobbin, Lawney Baldwin, Harvey Bartnof, Keith Barton, Allan Berenstein, Michael Bettinger, Leonard Brill, Tiela Chalmers, Daniel Chesir,

Robert Cohen, Aaron Cooper, Richard Crane, Steve Cronenwalt, Laurie Davis, Rosalinda Del Moral, Susan Douglass, Dustyn Duncan, Steve Elman, Jay Feinstein, Jonathan Funk, Yoram Gal, Barak Gale, Ron Gertz, William Goldstein, Robert Goldware, Steve Greenberg, Susan Greenspan, Stephanie Hannaford, Eric Keitel, Allyce Kimerling, Stephen Klein, Garry Koenigsberg, Ellen Kugler, Martin Kupferman, Walt Leiss, Robin Leonard, Edward Levin, Kipp Leyser, Ron Lezell, George Lucas, Frances McGowan, Mark Mendelow, Jonathan Mesinger, Ron Moskowitz, Chuck Norton, Marilyn O'Keeffe, Cheryl Orvis, Gordon Osser, Walter Palmer, Deborah Pines, James Proctor, Leila Raim, Jill Rose, Alita Rosenfeld, Gerald Rosenstein, Tom Rothgiesser, Sharyn Saslaffsky, Ben Schalit, Randy Schiller, Bill Schlichter, Jonathan Schwartz, David Shaber, Barry Siegel, Nancy Snow, David Stein, Nanci Stern, Sen Talley, Ed Tanovitz, Rob Tat, Sam Thal, Marion Trentman, Steven Unger, Susan Unger, Dana Vinicoff, Steven Walters, Eli Weinstein, Catherine Wisniewski and Ami Zusman.

This year, one-third of our membership are being recognized for the hours of work which they have contributed. This level of membership involvement is higher than any other congregation with which I am familiar. Again, my thanks to each of you.

—Don Albert

Happy New Year?

So what are they crazy? New Year's Greetings?
It's only July, I don't even have a tan yet.

The Newsletter Committee
wishes you a
wonderful rest of 5746

This space available
\$10.00 / 20 words

Well, the order form for Rosh Hashanah greetings will appear in the September issue of the Forward with a September 15th due date. So this is advance warning, start thinking of your snappy and/or heartfelt greetings now.

Contributions

Sha'ar Zahav welcomes all contributions, of all sizes, to mark any event, and to any of our funds. Contributions will be acknowledged in the *Forward* unless requested otherwise.

Donations were made to Sha'ar Zahav's funds in the past month by the following contributors:

General Fund

Alex Ingersoll & David Stein

Ross & Rose Goldware

Rachel Gardner

Sam Thal, in memory of Dr. Richard Bartlett

Tom Rothgiesser & George Lucas, in honor of Jerry Rosenstein's wonderful talk on his personal experience during the Holocaust

Richard Inlander, in honor of Joyce Ladar

Ora Prochovnick & Rena Frantz

David Gass, celebrating the new home of Shelley & Gabrielle; the new home of Ellen Kugler, and Brian Ellis' new home

Gordon Osser

Bernard Pechter, in honor of a speedy recovery for Phillip Pechter

Jonathan Schwartz, in memory of his father, Morris Schwartz

Newton & Gladys Inlander, in memory of his father and in honor of Adam Inlander's confirmation

Ben Schalit

Sen Talley, in memory of Ron Gertz, Morrie Hansfield, Lillian Talley, Winifred Linton; in appreciation of Richard Inlander

Michael Erceg & David Kotch, in honor of their special friends: David Stein, Alex Ingersoll, Don Albert, Steve Elman, Frank Hyman, Allan Berenstein, David Shaber, Richard Inlander. Thanking them for all that is special in their lives.

Jonathan Funk, in honor of Eric Keitel's 30th birthday

Bart Benderoff

Harriet Bloom, in honor of Nanci Stern's birthday

Leslie Bergson, in memory of Ron Gertz

Nanci Stern, in honor of Alan Lubliner for his gracious assistance

Martin Kupferman, in honor of James Proctor in appreciation for his work at the Jewish Home for the Aged

Steve Elman, in honor of the marriage of David Kotch & Michael Erceg, in honor of the birthdays of David Stein, Jerry Rosenstein & Eric Keitel, and in appreciation of Jerry Rosenstein.

Education Fund

Catherine Wisniewski

So Ask Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

I wanted to sign one of those cards to be an organ donor—so if I died, they could use me for transplants. But my mother said this is a terrible sin against Jewish law. Is she right?

Alarmed in Albuquerque

Dear Alarmed,

So by your Aunt Yente, you should understand, mother is always right. But this doesn't always mean mother knows what she's talking about.

There is a traditional Jewish reluctance to any mutilation of the body after death. And while part of the reason behind this is foolishness about resurrection (as though the One who can bring the dead back to life couldn't handle a missing kidney), there is also a very respectable concern. Our religion teaches that the body is holy, made in the image of God; so even after death, it must be treated with reverence and honor.

But there is a more important principle of Jewish law, known as *p'kuach nefesh*: the saving of life. It is a sin *not* to violate Jewish law, if the violation can save a life or heal sickness. Only two or three laws, like the prohibitions against worshipping idols and murder, are more important than the duty to save life; and while some mamas Aunt Yente has known claim that obedience to mother is one of these laws, you and your Aunt Yente know better.

What kind of religion would we have if it was more important to give proper ritual

treatment to a dead body than to help a living person walk, or see, or live? So whatever certain supposed authorities say (Aunt Yente is usually tolerant of people who have different views about religion, but this is pure foolishness), even under Orthodox halacha there *should* be no question that organ donation is a very great mitzvah, the one of saving life. Not to mention that it is one of the few mitzvahs you can do even when you're no longer around to do it.

And if there's any question mama will get in the way, so you should look into a will, as well as something the Vilna Gaon used to call "a durable power of attorney for health care," which few of Aunt Yente's readers should be without, for many reasons. As for Aunt Yente herself, she had signed a card donating for transplant her mouth, but there was some trouble about a warning label about compulsive talking. So instead, she is looking to transplant some of her hips (about 10 pounds each side) RIGHT NOW. Interested parties may write the *Forward*.

—Aunt Yente

Dear Aunt Yente,

What is the Jewish attitude towards sex?
Sincere on Sanchez

Dear Sincere,
We like it.

—Aunt Yente

All material © 1986 Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

AIDS Fund

In memory of Ron Gertz:

Robin Leonard

E.B. Kugler

David Gass

Michael McCormick

Edna Goldstein

Prayerbook Fund

Allan Berenstein, in honor of Daniel Chesir & Stefan Rowniak's new home; his grandfather's *yahrzeit*

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

David Kotch & Michael Erceg, in appreciation of Rabbi Kahn

Louis Fameli, in memory of Richard Bloom

Sen Talley

David Stein & Alex Ingersoll, in honor of David Kotch & Michael Erceg

Allan Berenstein, in honor of David Kotch & Michael Erceg, and Ellen Kugler's new home

Torah Fund

Alex Ingersoll & David Stein, in honor of Daniel Chesir & Stefan Rowniak's cohabitation

Building Fund

Robert Carrarra

Eric Keitel & Aaron Cooper, in memory of Ron Gertz, in honor of Alison Loebel's birthday, Harvey Bartnof and Kipp Leyser's anniversary, and Dan Chesir & Stefan Rowniak's new home

Jordan Lee

Library Fund

David Kotch & Michael Erceg

Cindy Schorr, in memory of Abraham Schorr

Allan Berenstein, in honor of Nanci Stern's award, and Cheryl Orvis & Beth's new home

July Yahrzeits

- 1 LeRoy W. Baldwin, Father of Lawney Baldwin
- 1 Marguerite Parsell, Aunt of Bill Schlichter
- 1 William S. Gross, Father of Roger Gross
- 4 Genendel Menachem Szekely, Grandmother of Marilyn Kalmar
- 4 (27 Sivan) Perel Berenstein, Grandmother of Allan Berenstein
- 6 (29 Sivan) John Blazewick, Father of Hannah Blazewick
- 6 (29 Sivan) Morris Toporek, Grandfather of Elliott Toporek
- 8 Edward Ingersoll, Father of Alex Ingersoll
- 11 Lillian Fox, Aunt of Tiela Chalmers
- 15 Clara Magoon, Aunt of Betty Kalis
- 15 Allan Zimmerman, Father of Mike Zimmerman
- 16 Nelly Meyer, Mother of Nancy Meyer
- 17 Steven Berman, Friend of the Congregation
- 17 (10 Tammuz) Hyman Witt, Father of Sue Witt
- 18 Mary Berkowitz, Grandmother of Roberta W.
- 18 Eli Shaber, Father of David Shaber
- 20 (13 Tammuz) Charles Crane, Father of Richard Crane
- 26 Meyer Kurtz, Grandfather of Susan Greenspan
- 28 Ann Bronstein Ross, Grandmother of Devorah Harris
- 29 Ernst Z. Rosenstein, Brother of Jerry Rosenstein

August Yahrzeits

- 1 Jean Sikoff, Aunt of David Glassberg
- 1 Sadie Kurtz Built, Great Aunt of Bruce Katz
- 1 Margaret Buddell, Grandmother of Abigail Abbuehl
- 4 Madelyn Gross Walters, Mother of Stephen Walters
- 4 (28 Tammuz) Samuel Irving Toporek, Father of Elliott Toporek
- 7 (2 Av) Rivka Bat David Leizerovich, Grandmother of Dov Barcan
- 8 Leo Leyser, Grandfather of Kipp Leyser
- 10 Celia Katz, Grandmother of Bruce Katz
- 12 Abraham Fishman, Husband of Isabel Fishman
- 13 Saul M. Mesinger, Father of Jonathan Mesinger
- 14 (9 Av) Sadie Radetsky, Grandmother of Allan Berenstein
- 15 Samuel Minsky, Grandfather of Mike Rankin
- 17 Morris Charney, Father of Seth Charney
- 18 Estella Mantey, Grandmother of Bill Schlichter
- 18 (13 Av) Mary Brown, Grandmother of Melvyn Kirsch
- 20 Arthur H. Klein, Father of Elliott Klein
- 20 (15 Av) Manuel Nachman, Father of Sen Talley
- 21 (16 Av) Louis Wouk, Grandfather of Nina Wouk
- 23 Michael Zook, Friend of Barry Rosen
- 23 Frances Glassberg, Aunt of David Glassberg
- 26 Anne Kurtz, Friend of Chaya Spector
- 27 Robert Kalman, Brother of Marilyn Kalman
- 28 (23 Av) Nathan Miller, Stepfather of G. Murray Miller
- 29 Bessie Bloom Minsky, Grandmother of Mike Rankin
- 29 (24 Av) Golda Rudman, Grandmother of Richard Crane
- 29 (24 Av) Fanny Prochovnick, Grandmother of Ora Prochovnick
- 31 (26 Av) Kosel Heilbrunn, Grandmother of Randy Heilbrunn

Note: Yahrzeits will be read at services on the Friday preceding the Yahrzeit date.

Women Advance

(Continued from page 3)

would be examining what it means to be a Jewish lesbian through lectures, discussion groups and workshops.

Rabbi Kahn has said on several occasions that Sha'ar Zahav is on the cutting edge of Reform Judaism, and that we are looked to nationally as an innovator. He's right and we should take advantage of our position in the limelight to make an important stand for women. Perhaps the women of Sha'ar Zahav could help define what the cutting edge means for our synagogue. We have a chance to make an impact on Judaism right now by feminizing it and modernizing it. By doing so, we would be carving out a more comfortable niche for ourselves as Jewish lesbians, for our sisters who are looking for a home and for our daughters, who, God forbid, might one day be saying, "Sephardic? No, I'm from New York."

If you're interested in making this "advance" weekend a reality (Sha'ar Zahavniks don't retreat, they advance), come to the first planning meeting on the evening of July 8. There's room for all kinds of experience and points of view, and it's a great way to educate yourself, make your opinions heard, meet new people and learn about the inner workings of the synagogue. We'll also be walking little old ladies across the street; so call me at 824-7290 and sign up today.

—Laurie Davis

Spotlight *(Continued from page 9)*

famed Ralph Frischman productions. Can stardom be far around the corner?

All in all, Francie's volunteer activities have enabled her to meet people and find out what it's like to be a Sha'ar Zahavnik. She became a member last February and this fall, she'll become a Jew. Her volunteer activities are now somewhat curtailed in order to give her more time to study in preparation for her conversion. She has joined an informal Hebrew study group and keeps in touch with Rabbi Kahn, who is one of the three rabbis guiding her studies.

Her experience as a Jew-by-choice makes Francie's point of view unique and her participation in our synagogue particularly welcome. Besides, this woman really knows how to throw a party!

—Laurie Davis

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Rabbi Yoel Kahn

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Vice President, Richard Inlander
Treasurer, Jerry Rosenstein
Recorder, Ben Schalit

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Eric Keitel
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Ellen Kugler
Shirley Liberman
Mike Rankin
Susan Talley

Member Union of American Hebrew Congregations and World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations.

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Ritual, Daniel Chesir
Social Action, Ron Lezell
Social Program, Shirley Liberman
Women's Havurah, Marion Trentman

Services are held every Friday evening beginning at 8:15 p.m., with an Oneg Shabbat following services. Services are generally held on the last Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. — check calendar for each month.

Data Managers:

Alita Rosenfeld
Jerry Rosenstein

Office Secretary:

Jacqueline Letalien

The Synagogue Office is open Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., and Friday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At other times, please leave a phone message.

Emergency Number: In an emergency, the Congregation can be contacted outside of office hours by calling 420-9718.

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is located in the Upper Market District of San Francisco at 220 Danvers at Caselli, which is one block south of the intersection of 18th & Market Streets. By public transport, take MUNI bus 33 Ashbury to 18th & Danvers and walk one block south on Danvers to Caselli.

Va'ad Report

The 1985-86 Va'ad met for the last time on the second Monday in June. Many interested members also attended, including several newly-elected board members. In his D'var Torah, Rabbi Kahn spoke of his concerns regarding the recent election in Austria and reminded us to avoid the pitfall of believing propaganda, the theme of which is "blaming the victim."

Past President Leila Raim took a moment to express the appreciation of the congregation for the fine work of the officers and board during their year in office. President Don Albert, as part of his report, invited discussion of the possibility of modifying the new ark perhaps with interior curtains, to shield the Torahs from view. An in-depth discussion followed, during which Rabbi Kahn invited us to consider the question of how we could meet the sensitivities of our more traditionally-minded members, while still maintaining our commitment to a forward-looking theological and ritual life.

Don reported that he will be chairing the Finance Committee, that Paul Cohen has assumed the chair of Bikkur Cholim, and that Bill Goldstein is the new chair of the Education Committee.

Treasurer Betty Kalis was unable to attend the meeting, but Don offered particular thanks to her for a job well done. Rabbi Kahn reported on progress in various areas of endeavor regarding AIDS, such as the National Jewish AIDS Project, and informed the Va'ad that the Family Havurah has plans for regular events in the future. He also reported that we will be able to purchase a new 30-volume version of the Talmud, thanks to the contributions of many interested members.

Office Secretary Jacqueline Letalien thanked those who have been helpful, and announced that she is working on improving office recordkeeping functions. On the UAHC front, Mike Rankin spoke of soon-to-be published articles on homosexuality in *Keeping Posted*, a journal for

high school students.

Ralph Frischman and David Gellman of the Building Committee presented plans for memorial boards to be placed in the sanctuary, and the Va'ad unanimously approved their work, voting to order one board immediately.

Other committee reports included updates on the myriad activities of the congregation, such as preparations for the Parade, for the Labor Day conference, and for a symposium on the confirmation of Supreme Court justices this fall.

Don closed his last meeting as President with a round of (very fine) champagne, and many thanks to all. We then formed a circle, as we do at the close of each meeting, for the singing of Oseh Shalom.

President Irene Ogus will convene the first meeting of the newly elected Va'ad on Monday, July 14, at 6:30, in the Oneg Room. I'll be wearing a different hat then, but, as always, hope to see you there!

—Richard Inlander, Recorder